

1 **Work Session**  
2 **Minutes**  
3 **February 15, 2006**  
4

5 *A Regular Meeting of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Leonia, Bergen County,*  
6 *New Jersey, was held this evening in the Borough Hall Annex, commencing at 7:30pm*  
7

8 **Council Present:** Mayor Laurence Cherchi, Councilperson  
9

10 **Council Absent:** none  
11

12 **Also Present:** Fran Lehmann, Borough Clerk, Brian Giblin, Borough Attorney,  
13 Victoria Miragliotta, Borough Administrator  
14

15 Mayor Laurence Cherchi called the meeting to order.  
16

17 Mayor Laurence Cherchi asked everyone to stand while Councilman President Puzzo led  
18 in the Pledge of Allegiance.  
19

20 **OPEN MEETING STATEMENT**  
21

22 Conditions of the Open Meeting Act have been met by Notice placed on the Bulletin  
23 Board at Borough Hall and notices sent to the Official Newspaper.  
24

25 Mayor Cherchi pointed out the Fire Exit.  
26

27 **PUBLIC COMMENTS**  
28

29 Martin Monaco, 352 Highwood Avenue – Mr. Monaco commended the Road  
30 Department for their outstanding snow removal.  
31

32 Nina Gaetjens – 351 Oakdene Avenue – Mrs. Gaetjens invited the Governing Body to the  
33 next Leonia Taxpayers Meeting, to be held March 15, 2006. Shared Services will be  
34 discussed.  
35

36 **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**  
37

38 a. Building Department Fees; Councilwoman Mitrani reported that the fees for the  
39 Building Department could not be increased because they are set by the Uniform  
40 Construction Code. The Borough Administrator stated that there are other fees that can be  
41 increased. Once the Budget is done she is going to review the fees and make  
42 recommendations to Laws and Ordinances.  
43

44 b. Tax Abatement; The Borough Administrator reported she spoke with the Tax  
45 Assessor; the law is very clear that an abatement is for five years. Councilman Hawkins

46 requested a listing of the homes whose abatement is up this year. Council President  
47 Puzzo asked if everyone was in favor of rescinding the Ordinance.  
48 Councilman Ryan would like to keep the abatement. Councilman Ryan felt it encourages  
49 people to make improvements.  
50  
51 Councilwoman Mitrani would like to do away with the Ordinance.  
52  
53 Councilman Hawkins feels the Ordinance assists people without the money to make the  
54 repairs. They can make the repairs and not have a large tax payment at the same time.  
55  
56 Councilman Raucci asked if other Municipalities had the Ordinance?  
57  
58 Council President Puzzo inquired if it is possible to modify the Ordinance so additions  
59 would not be covered?  
60  
61 The Borough Administrator reported that it cannot be modified to exclude certain  
62 projects.  
63 Mayor Cherchi asked for a consensus of the Council regarding the Ordinance:  
64 Councilwoman Heveran yes  
65 Councilman Hawkins yes  
66 Councilman Raucci yes  
67 Councilman Ryan no  
68 Councilwoman Mitrani yes  
69 Council President Puzzo yes.  
70  
71 The Borough Attorney was asked to prepare an ordinance for discussion at the second  
72 meeting in March.  
73  
74 Local Assistance Board - Councilman Ryan reported that with the appointment of Ellie  
75 Spiegel, the Local Assistance Board has a full compliment of members.  
76  
77 Engineering Fees Grand Avenue Stormwater Meeting – Mayor Cherchi referred to a  
78 memo from Ann Brown, Borough Engineer explaining that the Borough would be billed  
79 for the attendance of one person at the meeting. Mayor Cherchi noted that the Borough  
80 Engineer explained why there were two members in attendance.  
81  
82 Keys to Borough Hall, Conference Room and Annex – Councilwoman Heveran inquired  
83 if it were possible for keys to be made available to the Governing Body so they may have  
84 access t for meetings to the aforementioned areas? This was previously the policy but  
85 after an incident by a former employee, all the locks were changed and the Governing  
86 Body and members of the Boards, Committees and Commissions were not given new  
87 keys. After a discussion by the Governing Body it was decided that the Governing Body  
88 would be given new keys, as well as the Environmental Commission, Historic  
89 Preservation, and the Shade Tree Commission. The Borough Administrator stated she  
90 would notify Mr. Saitta to have the keys made and given to the Borough Clerk.  
91

92 Continuing Problems of Leaves on Downtown Sidewalks – Councilwoman Mitrani stated  
93 that the Downtown looks unkempt. The leaves have been removed but there are other  
94 issues that need to be addressed. Councilwoman Mitrani does not feel that ordinances are  
95 being enforced. The Governing Body discussed the concerns regarding the maintenance  
96 of the downtown area. A resolution will be prepared for the meeting of February 22 to be  
97 disseminated to the merchants along Broad Avenue.

98  
99 Police Commission Discussion and Laws and Ordinances – A discussion took place by  
100 the members of the Council on the structure of the Police Commission.

101  
102 Laws & Ordinances held until February 22.

103  
104 Review of Sick Time Policy – Council President Puzzo stated he does not feel that this  
105 policy is necessary with the budget constraints that the Municipality is facing.  
106 Councilman Puzzo asked the Borough Administrator to explain the policy. The Borough  
107 Administrator explained the policy and explained who was covered by the policy. Mayor  
108 Cherchi said the policy had been instituted as an initiative not to use sick time unless you  
109 were sick. After a discussion by the Council one of the options was not to take the benefit  
110 away from those currently receiving it. It would not be extended to new hires. This item  
111 was sent to Personnel and Finance and they will come back with a report for the first  
112 meeting in April.

113  
114 Flag Lots – Councilman Hawkins stated he asked Mr. Bach, Chairman of the Board of  
115 Adjustment to attend the meeting to describe to the Council what a Flag Lot was and  
116 what the Board of Adjustment was looking for from the Governing Body. Mr. Bach  
117 explained what he was looking for from the Council, as Chairman of the Board of  
118 Adjustment. Mayor Cherchi said the issue of Flag Lots was discussed by the Planning  
119 Board and there is a prohibition in the Code Book under Zoning, Chapter 290, section 8  
120 regarding frontage allowances.

121  
122 Councilman Hawkins would like the Council to consider passing an Ordinance that  
123 would prohibit Flag Lots completely.

124  
125 State of Municipal Parking Lot – Councilman Hawkins stated he asked to have this on  
126 the agenda because it has been subject of comments on the LTA Website. There is a lack  
127 of trash receptacles. Garbage and debris are all over the parking lot. Councilman  
128 Hawkins would like to have the DPW add the parking lot to the schedule of street  
129 cleaning. The Borough is going to spend money to fix Elm Place and the parking lot  
130 needs to be better maintained. The Borough Administrator will speak to Mr. Saitta about  
131 cleaning the parking lot. Councilman Puzzo asked if an area of the lot could be set aside  
132 for long term parking? This maybe something the Borough Engineer could address.

133  
134 Update on Downtown Revitalization/Scope of What is to be Done and What is Done –  
135 Councilman Hawkins asked to have this item on the agenda. He would like an update on  
136 the project in writing. The Borough Administrator will contact the Borough Engineer and

have a written report for March 6. Mayor Cherchi would like the Borough Engineer to attend the March 13<sup>th</sup> Meeting. The Borough Administrator will contact the engineer.

Transfer of Engineering Duties – Borough Administrator referred to a letter from Ken Job requesting clarification of the projects he is to over see. After a discussion by the Governing Body, they agreed to give the projects listed in the letter from Ann Brown, Birdsall Engineering (see attached letter) to Ann Brown, Birdsall Engineering. The Borough Administrator will notify Mr. Job of the Council's decision.

Downtown Business District Redevelopment, Who is Responsible – Councilwoman Mitrani stated she put this on the agenda because she feels the Governing Body should consider hiring a Downtown Manager to work with Property owners to revitalize the downtown. The Borough Administrator explained there are companies that do that. They work with the merchants and the Governing Body to find out what they are looking for. The Borough Administrator will investigate further the companies in the area and what their fees are.

Council President Puzzo made a motion to extend the meeting for another 30 minutes at 10:00pm, seconded by Councilman Raucci. All in favor; none opposed.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

a). COLA Increase for LOSAP – Councilwoman Heveran asked to have this item on the agenda. The Borough Administrator explained the amounts of the increase for LOSAP would be \$1,260 increase in this year's budget. It would be a one time increase and amount to \$36.00 per person who qualifies. The Ordinance would not need to be amended unless it is automatic increase. After a discussion by the Governing Body a resolution will be prepared for the Council Meeting of February 22, 2006.

b). Budget 2006 – Councilwoman Heveran gave a report on the Budget. Councilwoman informed the Council that the Finance and Personnel have met with the various departments and have made cuts in the department budgets. Councilwoman Heveran stated it is the goal of the Finance and Personnel Committee to have the budget introduced on time. The Borough Administrator would like the Governing Body to advise her of any cuts or questions they have on the proposed budget.

c). Requesting the Preparation of a Resolution Recognizing Leonia Woman's Club – Councilman Hawkins requested a resolution be prepared for the next meeting honoring the Woman's Club. The Borough Administrator explained that a proclamation would be better all the members of the Governing Body could sign it. The Governing Body agreed to have the Borough Administrator prepare a proclamation.

The following items were carried over to the March 6<sup>th</sup> Council Meeting:

Self Examining Resolution

CAP Ordinance

Amend Shade Tree Ordinance

183 Birdsall Report on Spring Street  
184 Discussion Cell Phone Bill for Gil Hawkins as Liaison to Overpeck Preserve  
185 Amendment to Cell Tower Lease  
186

187 **COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC**  
188

189 Mr. Martin Monaco, 352 Highwood Avenue; Mr. Monaco agreed with Council President  
190 Puzzo regarding the sick time benefits.  
191

192 Council President Puzzo made a motion to extend the meeting for an additional 20  
193 minutes to allow for Closed Session seconded by Councilman Raucci. All in favor; none  
194 opposed.  
195

196 **CLOSED SESSION (RESOLUTION)**  
197

198 A motion was made to go into closed session by Councilman Puzzo, seconded by  
199 Councilman Hawkins. All in favor; none opposed.  
200

201 A motion was made to come out of closed session by Councilman Puzzo, seconded by  
202 Councilman Hawkins. All in favor; none opposed  
203

204 Councilman Puzzo made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Councilwoman Heveran. All  
205 in favor; none opposed.  
206

207 As there was no further business before the Governing Body, the meeting was adjourned  
208 at 11:10pm  
209

210 Respectfully submitted,  
211

212

213

214 Fran Lehmann

215 Borough Clerk